

## Relationship between Communication Skills with Life Satisfaction among Students Studying at Islamic Azad University of Tehran: A Case Study

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### Abstract

**Purpose:** The aim of the present study was to determine the relationship between communication skills and life satisfaction among students of Islamic Azad University.

**Methodology:** This was an applied study in terms of its aim and a descriptive correlational in terms of its methodology. The research population included 190000 students studying at Islamic Azad University of Tehran in the academic year 2019-2020. The sample size was estimated to be 384 people selected by multi-stage cluster sampling method. Data were collected by Communication Skills Test-Revise (Queendom, 2004) and Students' Life Satisfaction Scale (Huebner, 1991) and analyzed by Pearson correlation coefficients and stepwise multiple regressions in SPSS ver.19 software.

**Findings:** The results showed that communication skills and all dimensions including the ability to receive and send message, emotional control, listening skill, insight into the communication process and communication with determination had a positive and significant relationship with life satisfaction in students ( $P < 0.01$ ). Communication skills significantly could predict 33.6% and among the dimensions of communication skills, three dimensions of listening skill, communication with determination and the ability to receive and send message together could predict 60.8% of life satisfaction changes in students ( $P < 0.001$ ), but the dimensions of emotional control and insight into the communication process did not enter the equation due to the lack of a significant increase in the amount of prediction ( $P > 0.05$ ).

**Conclusion:** According to the results of the present study, communication skills with life satisfaction have a significant relationship and predicted a significant portion of it. Therefore, planning to improve the satisfaction of life in students is essential by increasing their communication skills through workshops.

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## 1. Introduction

Today, life satisfaction is one of the issues that have attracted the attention of researchers, psychologists and sociologists and there are many studies on this topic (Mullarkey, et al, 2021). Life satisfaction as a mental and unique concept and an important indicator of mental health is a very important part of the sense of well-being and is based on a mental and personal judgment (CHO, 2019). Life satisfaction means the individual's general assessment and attitude toward the whole life and indicates how the basic needs of the individual and his/her goals have been fulfilled in life (Henriques, Marcenaro-Gutierrez & Lopez-Agudo, 2020).

World Health Organization (WHO) defines life satisfaction as comprehensive and general perceptions of life status and regards to indicators such as individual goals, priorities, standards and community values as important indicators for it (Chang, Xing, Ho & Yip, 2019). In another definition, life satisfaction is defined as the conscious cognitive and emotional evaluation of all aspects of life (Pang, et al, 2018). Life satisfaction requires an optimal, effective and efficient life, and a positive attitude toward life promotes it, despite difficulties and problems along with victories and accomplishments (Yin, Zhang & Shao, 2020). In fact, life satisfaction is a general concept about a person's perception of the whole life, and accordingly, people with high life satisfaction experience more positive emotions, is happier and more hopeful in life, evaluate their past more positively, and expect a happier and more desirable future (Mastari, et al, 2021).

One of the life satisfaction-related factors is communication skills (Poorbaferani, Amidi Mazaheri & Hasanzadeh, 2018). Man is a social being and communication is one of the oldest and highest human achievements to realize social life, and to have a better and more effective performance in society (Avia, Handiyani & Gayatri, 2021). Interpersonal relationship means the transfer of a message or concept of a person to another person(s) verbally and non-verbally (Muddle, O'Malley & Stupans, 2019). Communication skills are an important part of life skills that are defined as the ability to communicate effectively and efficiently with others (Krause, et al, 2017). Therefore, each individual needs to learn in their growth process in order to develop and flourish their potential talents and abilities and adapt to the environment (Moral, et al, 2020). This construct is one of the skills that people can engage between interpersonal interactions and the communication process where people share their information, thoughts and feelings through the exchange of verbal and non-verbal messages (Karnieli-Miller, Michael, Gothelf, Palombo & Meitar, 2021). Communication skills are multidimensional capabilities that include five skills to receive and send messages, emotional control, listening skills, insight into the relationship process and communication with determination (Baby, Gale & Swain, 2018).

There are very few studies on the relationship between communication skills and life satisfaction. For example, the results of studies by Chen, Yang & Feng (2019) showed that communication skills have a significant positive effect on the life satisfaction of the older adults. In another research Mello, Trintin-Rodrigues & Andretta (2019) reported that there was a positive and significant relationship between communication skills and life satisfaction with teenagers. Also, Pourrajab, Panahi Dorche & Parsa Broujeni (2019) had concluded that there is a positive and significant relationship between the communication skills with the quality of life of teachers. Poorbaferani, et al. (2018) reported a positive and significant correlation between communication skills with self-esteem, general self-efficacy and life satisfaction of married women. Results of a research by Ghaemi, Soltaninejad & Khaje (2018) indicated a positive and significant relationship between the communication skills with the quality of life of nurses. Esmaeilpour, Khajeh & Mahdavi (2013) concluded that there is a positive and significant relationship between communication skills with of couple marital satisfaction. In another research, Ghorbanshiroudi, et al (2011) reported a positive and significant correlation between emotional intelligence, life satisfaction and communication skills.

Today's students build the future of any society, and their current life satisfaction can play an important role in their current success and academic performance and better readiness to improve the situation of society in the near future. Therefore, it is essential to investigate the life satisfaction of students and carry out related studies with the aim of promoting their life satisfaction considering its significant effect on other

educational, personality and psychological variables. Another important point and one of the gaps in previous studies is ignorance of the relationship between communication skills and life satisfaction of students. In addition, there are few studies on their relationship in other groups; therefore, further research is needed to design programs to improve life satisfaction through communication skills. Therefore, the aim of the current study was to determine the relationship between communication skills and life satisfaction among students of Islamic Azad University.

## 2. Methodology

This is an applied study in terms of its aim and a descriptive correlational in terms of its implementation method. The research population included 190000 students at Islamic Azad University of Tehran in the academic year 2019-2020. These students were studying at Islamic Azad universities of Science and Research Units, Tehran North, Tehran West, Tehran East, Tehran South, Tehran Center, Medical, Dental and Electronic Units. The sample size was estimated to be 384 people who were selected using Krejcie and Morgan table by multi-stage cluster sampling method. In this sampling method, first a number of disciplines were selected from all academic units and then a number of classes were randomly selected from different disciplines and all class members responded to the research tools.

It should be noted that the content validity of Communication Skills Test-Revise and Students' Life Satisfaction Scale was confirmed by experts the reliability of the above instruments was also confirmed using Cronbach's alpha method and by calculating the inter-item correlation coefficient ( $\alpha > 0.70$ ). Prior to the study, coordination was made with the officials of the Central Organization of Islamic Azad University and Islamic Azad Universities of Tehran, the student list was prepared separately by field of study and class, and then students of a number of classes were randomly selected as a sample. Ethical considerations and the importance and necessity of research were expressed to the participants and they were asked to respond to research instruments. It should be noted that they were explained about the lack of correct and incorrect answers in the instruments and giving the best answer, i.e. an answer that reflects their real and current situation. The completed instruments were collected and the participants were appreciated. Finally, the data analysis was carried out using the related statistical software. Data were collected by Communication Skills Test-Revise and Students' Life Satisfaction Scale and then analyzed using Pearson correlation coefficient and stepwise multiple regression methods in SPSS ver.19. P-value  $< 0.05$  was considered as the significance level.

## 3. Findings

Participants included 384 students and the mean, standard deviation and correlation coefficients of communication skills and its dimensions with student life satisfaction are listed in Table 1.

**Table1.** Mean standard deviation and correlation coefficients of communication skills and its dimensions with student life satisfaction

Variable	Mean	Standard deviation	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Ability to receive and send messages	28/08	2/48	1					
2. Emotional control	27/27	5/92	/49** 0	1				
3. Listening skills	17/76	1/80	/60** 0	/39** 0	1			
4. Insights into the communication process	16/55	2/49	/44** 0	/52** 0	/58** 0	1		

5.								
Communication with determination	13/85	2/18	/47** 0	/41** 0	/46** 0	/50** 0	1	
6. Total communication skills	10/51 3	2/13 6	/78** 0	/89** 0	/85** 0	/87** 0	/92** 0	1
7. Life satisfaction	12/60 5	2/00 6	/56** 0	/43** 0	/71** 0	/52** 0	/66** 0	/58** 0
0/01P<**								

As can be observed in Table 1, there was a positive and significant relationship between communication skills and all its dimensions, including the ability to receive and send messages, emotional control, listening skills, insight into the communication process and communication with determination with life satisfaction in students ( $P < 0.01$ ). The regression results on the ability of communication skills to predict student life satisfaction are reported in Table 2.

**Table2.** Regression results to evaluate the ability of communication skills to predict life satisfaction in students

Predictive variable	R	R <sup>2</sup>	df 1	df 2	F- statis- tic	Sig	Bet a	t- statis- tic	Sig
Communication skills	.66 0/	.336 0/	1	3 8 2	5/37 6	.001 0/	.34 0/	7/34	.001 0/

As can be observed in Table 2, communication skills were able to significantly predict 33.6% of changes in life satisfaction of students ( $P < 0.001$ ). The results of stepwise multiple regressions on the ability of communication skills dimension to predict life satisfaction in students is reported in Table 3.

**Table3.** Stepwise multiple regression results on the ability of communication skills dimensions to predict life satisfaction in students

Predictive variable	R	R <sup>2</sup>	df 1	df 2	F- statist- ic	Sig	Bet a	t- statist- ic	Sig
Predictive variable	.71 0	.504 0/	1	38 2	9/25 3	.001 0/	.48 0	9/65	.001 0/
Listening skills							.35 0	6/46	.001 0/
Listening skills, and communication with determination	.76 0	.577 0/	2	38 1	6/67 6	.001 0/	.30 0	5/55	.001 0/
Listening skills, communication with determination, and the ability to receive and send messages							.30 0	5/48	.001 0/

As can be observed in Table 3, listening skills entered the regression equation in the first model, and according to the correlation coefficient of 0.71, this variable was able to predict 50.4% of changes in student life satisfaction. In the second model, after listening skills, the variable of communication with determination entered the regression equation and according to the correlation coefficient of 0.76, these two variables together were able to predict 57.7% of their life satisfaction changes. In the third model, after listening skills and communication with determination, the variable of ability to receive and send messages entered the regression equation and, according to the correlation coefficient of 0.78, these three variables together were able to predict 60.8% of changes in student life satisfaction, and that these values were statistically significant ( $P < 0.001$ ). However, variables of emotional control and insight into the communication process did not enter the equation due to no significant increase in the prediction rate ( $P > 0.05$ ).

#### 4. Discussion

Student life satisfaction plays an important role in promoting their health and academic performance and career success in the near future. Therefore, the aim of the present study was to determine the relationship between communication skills and life satisfaction among students studying at Islamic Azad University. Consistent with studies by Chen, et al. (2019), Mello et al. (2019), PourRajab, et al. (2019), Poorbaferani, et al. (2018), Ghaemi, et al. (2018), Esmailpour, et al. (2013) and Ghorbanshiroudi, et al. (2011), the results of the present study showed a positive and significant relationship between communication skills and its dimensions including the ability to receive and send messages, emotional control, listening skills, insight into the communication process and communication with determination with life satisfaction of students. To interpret these results, it can be said that students with high levels of communication skills can have more life satisfaction. If students can effectively listen to the other person, it means they have active listening skills. If they can understand the message transferred from the other person and to send a message to each other, i.e. to respond to his/her message, they will have another dimension of communication skills, which is the ability to receive and send messages. Therefore, they can get more satisfaction from their mutual relationship, and life satisfaction. It is very important to have serious determination while communicating with others, so, if students can equip themselves with this mechanism, they will undoubtedly be more satisfied with their mutual relationship. Another characteristic or dimension of communication is the control of emotions and feelings communicating with others. If students can control and manage their emotions, they will undoubtedly be able to achieve higher levels of communication skills and, therefore, have more life satisfaction.

In another words, it can be said that it is important and necessary to discuss the life satisfaction components. We can communicate with a person or an inanimate environment. When we communicate with other people, the other person can be family, friends, professors or university staff. In this case, having higher level communication skills leads to correct and more effective communication, this in turn can create a kind of inner and deep satisfaction, and higher total life satisfaction. In contrast, we sometimes communicate with the environment. For example, students have a feeling towards their living environment and the university environment, which can range from very enjoyable to very boring or very joyful to very sad and so on. Therefore, the type of feeling a person has towards the environment is a kind of two-way communication that can lead to life satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Overall, it can be said that equipping students with communication skills can lead to more effective and efficient communication with people and the inanimate environment, which in turn leads to increased life satisfaction.

The results of the present study also indicate the significant role of communication skills and its dimensions including the ability to receive and send messages, emotional control, listening skills, insight into the communication process and communication with determination in predicting life satisfaction in students. To interpret these results, it can be said that communication skills and its dimensions have a positive and significant relationship with many positive psychological indicators such as happiness, hope, resilience,

psychological well-being, etc. that have the ability to predict life satisfaction. Since life satisfaction is also one of the positive psychological indicators, it is logical that communication skills and its dimensions can play a significant role in predicting life satisfaction among students. Therefore, communication skills and their dimensions were able to predict life satisfaction among students.

Also, recognizing and improving communication skills should be considered as one of the main topics of courses in all fields of study, especially communication, educational sciences and psychology. According to the results of the present study, it is also suggested to design an educational package to teach communication skills and investigate its effect on life satisfaction or other psychological variables in students.

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